

SIMCHAS SHABBOS



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פרשת בחוקתי



Rabbi Yosef Strassfeld Shlita

The parsha begins with a guarantee from הקב"ה that if we follow in the ways of Hashem then we will have peace and prosperity. The wording the Torah uses is "אם בחוקתי תילכו". Rashi explains that to mean "שתהיו עמלים בתורה" – "You should toil in the study of the Torah". Rashi deduces his explanation by default: The pasuk can't be referring to doing מצות because the next words of the pasuk are "ואת מצותי תשמרו" – "And my commandments you should watch" - so the word "בחוקתי" must mean Torah study. However, how does Rashi know it means to *toil* in Torah study and not engage a more relaxed state of learning?

The מפרשים point out that the Torah says "תלכו" – "You should go" - which means that a person should study Torah even as he travels. When a person is on the move it is much more difficult to concentrate, and one who can learn even in that situation and is willing to invest the extra strength in doing so, his effort surely falls under the category of עמלות – toil. To such a person the Torah guarantees success in all his endeavors.

The Brisker Rav used to learn with his father, the Rav Chaim, on a daily basis. At one point, Rav Chaim sent the Brisker Rav on various errands during their study time. When the Brisker Rav complained that he wished to learn with his father and not run around, his father said, "I am only sending you on these errands to train you to learn as you travel".

Halacha Corner

We explained in the previous week's halacha that בורר – separating on Shabbos - is prohibited unless three conditions are simultaneously present. One of those conditions is taking the מתוך הפסולת – the food (desired object) from the refuse (undesired object). However, this prohibition only applies if the act of separating is improving all or part of the mixture for a positive purpose, such as separating raisins from nuts in order to eat the nuts. If the purpose of moving the undesired is not to separate but rather to remove the undesired from on top of the desired, which is blocking access to what the person wishes to eat, it would be permitted. For example, if the apples are piled on top of the oranges, a person may remove the apples to reach an orange, since he is not improving the mixture in any way.

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The simple understanding of Rashi "שתהיו עמלים בתורה" is that the way to acquire and make a true connection is through עמילות – toil. To study the Torah in a more passive way will not allow a person to reach the deepest and fullest הבנה is the holy words of the Torah.

The הפסח חיים says an even more profound explanation: The reward for the study of Torah does not come from the knowledge attained from a person's studies, rather it is the effort exerted in gain that knowledge. So even if a person does not fully comprehend what he has learned, he gets rewarded for the effort in trying. This is contrary to the business world we live in, if a person orders a custom suit and it is delivered to him miss-shaped and not wearable, the tailor gets no money at all. He can complain about all the effort he put into making the suit, and give excuses for the terrible results, but that won't get him paid. In this world we pay for results we don't care for effort, but in the coming world Hashem doesn't care for results he cares about effort and the more we toil the more reward we get.

Short Story

Rebbetzin Kanievsky related the following story which she heard from the daughter of the woman involved:

There was a poor widow who managed to scrape by and feed her family with a large dose of faith. When her three daughters reached marriageable age she knew she had no money to marry even one of them off. She bought a lottery ticket and to her delight she won 25,000 lirot, enough to marry off all three daughters.

As they were celebrating, an orphaned nephew came to them crying that he found a שידוך but the girl's parents wanted 25,000 lirot to pay for half of their apartment. Without hesitating, the widow gave him all the money and he left happy. After he left her daughters cried, asking "How can you give away all of our wedding money?" She replied, "It is obvious that Hashem wanted that money to go to him. He needed exactly the amount we won, and Hashem will help us when the time is right".

And so it was. With each daughter, the funds needed seemed to just materialize. When the first daughter got engaged, one of the others received an unexpected inheritance right before the wedding. The other daughters married into families who were able to shoulder all of the wedding expenses.

The בטחון of this widow is truly inspirational!